

The transformation of information technology (IT) over the past 25 years has had a significant impact on the Department of the Navy, and CHIPS Magazine has been at the forefront — reporting on the latest IT breakthroughs, policy and processes. Of course, 25 years ago, the term office automation, not information technology, was used to describe our computing environment.

Some notable changes of the past 25 years that I have witnessed during my time here at the DON include the migration of mainframe computing to desktop or personal computing. This moved the IT community from depending on the IT gurus who worked behind a glass wall to becoming the IT gurus with all the applications we needed on our own desktops.

As this migration from mainframe to desktop computing was taking place, I was involved in the Department's transition from custom solutions to commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) solutions. We went from using what was considered leading edge technologies to design, develop and build unique, full MILSPEC tactical computers and processes, to COTS and non-developmental technologies, utilizing open systems and architectures.

The reach of the DON's IT transformation continued to extend to the warfighter with the deployment of SIPRNET, our Secure Internet Protocol that got us on our way to information sharing between the warfighter and the supporting shore infrastructure. Many will attest to the fact that this is still a work in progress, but we've come a long way over the years. Adding to the sharing between the warfighter and the shore infrastructure has been the acceptance and use of the Internet as a transformational tool. Web-enabled applications have become "an accelerant" to information sharing, reachback and process improvement across the board.

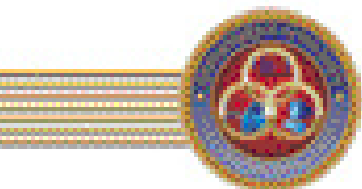
The Navy Marine Corps Intranet (NMCI) gave us a new perspective and solid data on the cost of desktop computing and the proliferation of applications and networks in use across the DON. In the process of standardizing our computing environment, we took a hard look at the number of applications in use. We were surprised at the number and variety of them, but realized that we were not alone; some industry leaders found that they had an even higher number of applications.

We established Functional Area Managers who were responsible for applying a standard process to rationalize legacy applications. The result of this effort is a significantly reduced IT portfolio that provides a higher degree of efficacy. So, NMCI was a forcing function that compelled us to make some difficult decisions, but it also gave us a sense of *Enterprise*, as maintaining the DON's desktops and networks became a unified venture. With the fully trained and qualified network support staff that NMCI provided, viruses were blocked before they could strike, hackers were stopped before they could wreak havoc, and our security posture was enhanced through enterprise-wide solutions such as cryptographic logon, which was efficiently implemented for all the DON's shore-based computers.

A more recent advance that has transformed not just the DON workplace, but much of the workforce also, is the use of broadband wireless and handheld computers. Since their introduction to the DON in early 2000 as a few test devices in the DON CIO, they have become prolific throughout the Department. These devices have redefined the word mobility. It's only been a few years, but people can't imagine how they lived without them. We have just begun scratching the surface — hang on for the next 25 years!

I congratulate CHIPS for its excellence and dedication to its mission of sharing information, technology and experience, and look forward to another 25 years of CHIPS Magazine.

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